

GEORGE HERMES

An Interview Conducted by
Julia Nutter

April 22, 2003

For The
Department of Human Services
of the
Township of North Brunswick
North Brunswick, New Jersey

INTERVIEW: George Hermes

INTERVIEWED BY: Julia Nutter

PLACE:

DATE: April 22, 2003

NUTTER: _____. State your full name and how you got it.

HERMES: My name is George Robert Hermes. My Dad's name was George, but I'm not a junior. _____. And that's why my name is George Robert Hermes.

NUTTER: Did you have a nickname while you were growing up?

HERMES: Mr. Bob.

NUTTER: Why Mr. Bob?

HERMES: _____ been working for the township for approximately 28 years. And in that time frame I was involved with working with preschool and driving the van and the bus for the children. One of our instructors, Mrs. Benson, who's now the director of Park Recreation, at that time she was running the program, and she called me "Mr. Bob" in front of the children, and it's become attached to me since back in the mid-seventies.

NUTTER: Where were you born and when?

HERMES: I was born in 1949. I was born, well, at that time it

was called Middlesex Hospital, which is now Robert Wood Johnson Hospital.

NUTTER: Did you have any siblings when you were growing up?

HERMES: No, I'm an only child.

NUTTER: Where did you parents both work?

HERMES: My dad owned-- Actually he started working as-- He was a chef, and he worked Steam Mill Diner, which is located in New Brunswick at _____. I believe now--it's changed its name over the years--it's a Spanish restaurant, I believe. The name escapes me, but this is going back many, many years ago. From there he had a luncheonette on the corner of _____ in New Brunswick, which was by _____ Park. I worked there through high school. He also had a restaurant in New Brunswick called the White Kitchen, which was located in the basement of the home that I was born in. It's interesting. Some of his customers--one comes to mind was the Nelson Family, Ozzie Nelson, Ricky Nelson, the father went to Rutgers University at the time, and he used to frequent my father's restaurant. And that was basically it. My mom worked at the restaurant. It was a family-run business, a very small, family business owners, my parents.

NUTTER: Did you have any pets?

HERMES: Yes. I grew up with pets, many pets. I had a cat named Snowball, a pure white cat. Had a boxer. We had a basset hound. We had a couple of French poodles, a black lab. At present I do not have a pet.

NUTTER: Where did your family buy their food, clothes, other essentials?

HERMES: Years ago, I can remember there was what's now--it was on Georges Road, and you can possibly help me because there's a Krauszer's on the corner now, and I think there's a pizza _____ mall right across from McDonald's. Years ago there used to be a Mayfair Supermarket there on Georges Road. That was our grocery store. What was the second part of that question? Sorry....

NUTTER: Where did you buy your clothes?

HERMES: Well, North Brunswick Shopping Center many years ago housed Korvette's. There was a Korvette's store there, a department store. There was a Grant's, a W.T. Grant's. New Brunswick had Brown's Clothing, and I think Brown's Clothing moved out to North Brunswick, and that's where we purchased most of our clothes.

NUTTER: Do you remember your family discussing world events,

politics like at home?

HERMES: Not really, no. You've got to understand that back many years ago it was basically--the town was, the politics was it was a Democrat town for many, many years. My parents often--I can remember them speaking about Fred Hermann, about how good a mayor he was. Fritz Gil____, whom I knew. He was the mayor for a short period of time, but he was a great man. Grew up and worked through politics. I was working for the town, and I've gone through a couple of mayors. Quite a few years ago it was a council, then it was a township committee, and now it's a township council, and they changed the form of government in North Brunswick. They structured it where we went from township committee to a township council; these three ____ departments they consolidated to make it more efficient. And when they did that, they changed the form of government in North Brunswick to what we have now, township council.

NUTTER: What ____ you were growing up, and what were your favorite childhood games?

HERMES: Well, growing up, I didn't really frequent the parks. My ____ was hunting and fishing. I used to fish all the time at Farrington Lake. I used to go to ____ Lake. I used to hunt by Farrington Lake over where the dam is now _____. We used to hunt there. I used to hunt over on Governor's Point before Governor's

Point was built, before there were any townhouses over there. Basically that's what I did most of my life. I used to walk the railroad tracks from down where the _____, which is the _____ I showed you. I used to walk the railroad tracks out to Milltown to the trestle with a friend of mine, and we used to fish out there. That was basically--that was my livelihood, hunting and fishing.

NUTTER: Who influenced you to hunt and fish?

HERMES: My dad was a very hard-working person. He was a workaholic. He never really had time, unfortunately, to do the things recreationally that he probably would have liked to do. Because, again, owning a restaurant, a mom-and-pop, took a lot of his time. My uncle, my mom's brother, he was the one that got me involved in the things that I enjoyed--and I still do hunting and fishing--as a child.

NUTTER: What schools did you go to?

HERMES: Okay. I started off with Parsons School, which was located at the time up over on Hermann Road. I can remember I went there from kindergarten to fourth grade. From there I went out to Maple Meade School, which now is the administrative building for the board of ed. I went there for one year, fourth grade. After that I went to middle school, which at that time went from fifth grade through the ninth grade. And from there I

went to--I was the first class to go to the new New Brunswick High School, which is on Livingston Avenue, up on Livingston Avenue, near Hermann Road. I went there for tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades, those years. The first air-conditioned school in the state, if I'm not mistaken, was New Brunswick High School. If I'm not mistaken, it was one of the first ones around here that was air-conditioned.

NUTTER: What were your schools like?

HERMES: What were my schools like? Well, there were-- Very informal, the teachers. We didn't have the problems that confront, unfortunately, the staff and the teachers today. Discipline wasn't really a problem. I think the biggest thing we got in trouble for, especially in high school, was wearing jeans that had the stitching on the outside. There was like a dress code, even in a public school system, and you couldn't wear jeans that had stitching on them. Lots of times I was down at the principal's office for that, which, again, compared to what today is, it was nothing.

I'm not saying the teachers aren't dedicated today. They certainly are. But a case in point, I had a teacher who lived on my street. I lived on Nassau Street in North Brunswick for years. She was my English teacher, and she lived down the street from me. She always found the time to tutor me, help me in areas that I was weak in, and it was great. We had a good time. I didn't

really have any problems in school growing up, going through the school system, with the problems that they're having today. It was good. Everybody got together.

We had teen dances. When we were in school, we had teen dances right after school from like three o'clock to five o'clock. The kids could go and dance, and they had a record player; instead of a band, they had records and they played 45 records. That was some of the entertainment that they had. Other forms of entertainment, we had the drive-in theater, which was located now where _____ is, in that area, near _____ Park. We went there many times. We had another drive-in on Route 18 in East Brunswick, which was good. We had good times.

NUTTER: Do you remember any violence or drugs _____?

HERMES: No. Violence? Like I said, I went through school _____. It was interesting. In North Brunswick when I went to school, especially when I was little, we had one African-American family. It was one family lived in North Brunswick, and we all got along. It was a large family, and we all went through school together. It was great. We had no problems. I think problems started to develop, if I'm not mistaken, in the school system, in the high school. I graduated in 1967 from New Brunswick High. My wife graduated in '69. I think during her last year in high school problems started to develop with violence and things like that. I can honestly say, no, I didn't have that problem. We didn't have

that problem.

NUTTER: Did the violence _____ involve discrimination?

HERMES: Yes, I believe that's true.

NUTTER: Who was your favorite teacher, and why were they special?

HERMES: Mrs. Titus. Again, the one I mentioned earlier, Mrs. Titus was one of my special teachers. It's interesting, and what goes around comes around. And you'll probably experience it, too, and I'm sure your parents have had that problem. First impression was she seemed like she was a mean teacher, and she was a strict teacher, and I really kind of like hated her. But in all honesty, she was tough, a tough teacher, because she wanted to make her pupils better pupils. Again, she had the time--she always found the time to help people either right after school or they were welcome at her house, and she helped me in English. Other teachers, Mr. Steve, Mr. Rozanski[sp?], he was a science teacher. He's another teacher that stands out. He always was very helpful, not only in the classroom but after he would help us. And coaches, too. I played some sports. I could always go to a coach if I had a problem. Mr. Nicholas was one of our phys ed teachers when I went to school. He was another one who stands out that I can remember.

NUTTER: What school activities--did you participate in any sports or--?

HERMES: I really didn't, not through the school system. I played a lot of sandlot. The fact is that I never really--going through high school I worked at the restaurant with my dad, weekends, and before school and after school. But I can remember playing as a kid. We got a group of neighborhood kids together, and we used to play football, touch football _____. We used to play Sunday mornings. I played baseball. I never got involved actually through the school system, because _____ football or baseball.

NUTTER: Did you in general like school?

HERMES: _____. Probably way back when _____. Unfortunately, sometimes you learn too late it's the best time of your life. I can remember one time me saying to my parents that I hate school. And they said to me, "It's the best time of your life. Wait 'til you have to go out and work for a living." And I couldn't believe it. I said, "No, no, no." I can remember my children when they said it and my saying the same thing: "It's the best time in your life. Enjoy it." I'm sure they'll be saying it to their children.

NUTTER: Do you remember any fads during your youth?

HERMES: _____ slinkies. Skate boarding. Skate boarding was big then. We used to skate board between--in the shopping center, I think it's still there--between at that time it was Grant's and Korvette's. There was an alley way that sloped, it sloped down, and we used to go there and skate board. That was our big thing, you know, in the summer and weekends. When I wasn't hunting and fishing, we used to skate board. That was the big thing to do.

NUTTER: Any clothing fads?

HERMES: Well, at that time they were called dungarees--they were called dungarees back then--you know, bell bottoms. I remember the bell bottoms. That was the big thing. Wide ties. But they come in, and they go out. It's funny. Years ago--just to throw it in--I notice now everybody wears caps. The kids _____ they wore caps. But years ago we didn't wear caps. That's about it.

NUTTER: Where did you and your friends hang out?

HERMES: Well, we used to hang out at the lake. We used to hang out in Milltown at the trestle and fish. There used to be a soda joint, for lack of a better word; it was like a luncheonette. We used to hang out there after school. I guess that was a _____ on Georges Road actually. It's right across the street-- I think there's this Headquarters there now. It's called Headquarters; it's a restaurant right across from Arthur's Steakhouse. But

there used to be a butcher market there and right along side was a soda shop, and that's where we used to hang out after school.

NUTTER: Was your school segregated _____?

HERMES: No.

NUTTER: Where have you lived as an adult?

HERMES: All my life I've lived on Nassau Street in North Brunswick.

NUTTER: In the same house?

HERMES: Well, again, the explanation being that I was fortunate enough to inherit a house. That's one thing about being an only child. My parents--my dad died at a young age because, unfortunately, he had health problems. And my wife and I used to live upstairs _____ in the same house. When my dad passed away, my mom said to my wife and I, "Why don't you come downstairs and live with me?" So we did. And now my mom's been passed away for a number of years, and my wife and I live there. So consequently--I've helped a lot of people move in my lifetime, but I've never moved myself.

NUTTER: What organizations or clubs have you belonged to as an

adult?

HERMES: As an adult.... I belong to two hunting clubs. I used to belong to a fishing club. As a child, I was a Boy Scout, I was a Cub Scout. I went through those ranks. But that's basically it.

NUTTER: _____ the Fishing Derby _____?

HERMES: Yes. We started the Fishing Derby-- Actually the one coming up now, we always held it at _____. I'm sorry, we always hold it at _____. We used to hold it at Farrington Lake when we started for the first few years. But that seemed to be dangerous; it was too dangerous of a situation. So we moved the site from _____ Dam over to _____ over off of Route 130. We're now going into our 27th year. We started it and expanded it through the Parks and Recreation, with the help of the staff there. And it's a good activity, it's great. It brings the kids out to fish and possibly win some prizes and to have a good time _____.

NUTTER: What is the scariest thing that's ever happened to you?

HERMES: The scariest thing that's ever happened? Well, personally--I don't know if you want to put this on tape or not-- but the scariest was when unfortunately like my mom was with us, and she _____. Unfortunately, her health was declining, and we almost lost her one day. We were able to bring her back. I guess

that was one of the scariest moments in my life.

NUTTER: When was this?

HERMES: This was back--my mom passed away about eight years ago.

NUTTER: What is the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you?

HERMES: Your tape will probably run out before I finish.

NUTTER: No, I've got plenty of tape.

HERMES: The most embarrassing. I also was involved in for a couple of years the adult drama show many years ago. I was on stage, and even though I had a very small part, very limited lines, I couldn't remember the lines. And I was starting, looking for help, and it was funny. To make it even funnier. Friends of ours came up to see us and to see the show, and this girl had a very unique laugh. I could hear out of the audience, and I could just feel myself just crumbling on stage. I guess that was one of my most embarrassing moments. I'm sure I've had more. I've run out of gas a couple of times, which is embarrassing.

NUTTER: What are your hobbies?

HERMES: Fishing and hunting.

NUTTER: Fishing and hunting.

HERMES: Yes.

NUTTER: What is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you?

HERMES: The most amazing? Well, again it lines up with hunting and fishing. I caught a very large fish. I caught a 28-pound bass, and I was the only one fishing. Everybody said, "You're not going to catch anything." We were down at the beach, _____ on the beach. It was cold and blowy, and I think it was Election Day, November back in the seventies. Everybody said, "You're crazy. You're not going to catch anything." And it was one of the first fish I caught, and it was one of the largest fish I ever caught. And that's kind of amazing.

NUTTER: How big was it?

HERMES: It was 28 pounds, and I think it was 47 inches long. You know what? Now that you're jogging my memory, I also liked to when I was young--and I didn't have any brothers or sisters, but I did hang around with my cousins, who were like brothers to me--and we used to do a lot of surfing.

NUTTER: Oh, cool. Where did you do that?

HERMES: In Belmar. We used to go down to Belmar. And one of the most embarrassing things that happened, now that we're talking about surfing, I happened to close the beaches in one section of New Jersey because I went out right after a storm, and I got caught in-- The worst thing I did was I got off the board, and I tried to push the board, and I tried to swim. I made it to the jetty, and I was lucky I had a wetsuit on. But _____. I cut myself up pretty badly. The ambulance was there, and the police were there. That was embarrassing. I was covered with blood from head to toe because of all the barnacles when I climbed up on the jetty. Needless to say, the board made it in safely, my surf board. That was another thing _____.

NUTTER: That was when you were--?

HERMES: Oh, that was during high school, through my high school years.

NUTTER: Moving on to religion. Describe your religious beliefs.

HERMES: There is a God. For many years my parents brought me up as a Protestant Baptist, and I went to the George Street Baptist Church. I went there religiously. Every Sunday went to Sunday

School. Was a trustee at the church, was on the board of trustees. And then as I got older, unfortunately, there was a change there. A new pastor came in, and we kind of got away from the church. Unfortunately I haven't been back to the church. But I was brought up believing that there is a God and everything associated with that.

NUTTER: So did you leave the church because of the pastor or just because _____?

HERMES: Probably--and I don't want to throw guilt on the church--I guess part of the reason was I'm-- My wife and I--my wife was a Catholic, and we were married in St. Patrick's Chapel by the Reverend Abernathy. We didn't want to have the families against us. We figured we'd get married in a neutral church with a neutral pastor. That, again, I guess might have been part of the reason. Although my wife converted from the Catholic religion to the Protestant Baptist religion. We went to church for a number of years after we were married. A large part of that, I think, was when our pastor that I really grew up with left.

Unfortunately he moved out of the area, and we couldn't really follow him. Then, of course, we always want to make excuses, unfortunately, and that was probably the reason I didn't go back to the church.

NUTTER: Who was the most influential person in your religious

life, who motivated you to go to church?

HERMES: I would have to say both my parents, both my mom and my dad.

NUTTER: What advice would you give to a grandchild on their wedding day?

HERMES: Well, I've been happily married for 32 years. I guess-- I'm giving advice to my grandchildren or my children?

NUTTER: Grandchildren or child, whoever's close to you that would be getting married.

HERMES: That would be the _____. I would have to say that there's going to be many changes in your life. You're going to experience changes. You're going to have to--it's a commitment, it's a 50-50 commitment. You're going to have to give and take. You're going to have to work with one another. And I think if you follow those guidelines--you have to be able to give and take--I think everything's going to work out. You should know, I think you should know beforehand, before you make the commitment, whether or not--if there's any question in your mind, you know, whether you should get married, that's the time.... Courtship is the time to find out whether or not you're really meant for one another. [BREAK]

NUTTER: How old were you when you started dating, and who was your first date?

HERMES: When I started dating, I guess I was in kindergarten. It was funny because I liked a girl in kindergarten. I remember going to one of these bubble gum machines that had rings, and I can remember buying a ring and giving it to her. Since then, you know, a few women. But my wife and I, we went together-- I was a junior in high school, and she was a freshman, and we dated. Came college, and we kind of like split, and we said, "You know what? Let's give it a chance. If we're meant for one another, we'll come back together." So we kind of like drifted apart. She did her thing, I did my thing. And whether it be fate or whatever, we got together again. We went together for a number of years. Got married in 1971. We had our first child five years later. I guess I proposed to her--I guess it was five years before that we initially were going together--seriously with a ring, and we got married.

NUTTER: Where did you used to go on dates?

HERMES: Well, let's see. We used to go over to--we used to go to the drive-in theater, which _____. We used to go to the movies in New Brunswick, a couple of movie theaters, the RKO State, the RKO Rivoli. We used to-- We didn't hang in a mall. _____. We used to

go double-dating with other couples and maybe we'd go to-- It was interesting when my father had the restaurant in New Brunswick. He had a couple of college students working for him who belonged to fraternities. And we would often find ourselves at fraternity houses on weekends at Rutgers and spend some time there. We used to go down the Shore, used to drive down the Shore and go to Seaside.

NUTTER: _____ describe your marriage proposal.

HERMES: Describe my marriage proposal, what I said to my wife?

NUTTER: Yes.

HERMES: Actually I can remember when I was courting her, I was scared to death of her father. He was a little short guy, but he seemed like he was mean. So I mean I had to have my wife in by curfew was at that time--he was very strict--ten o'clock. Special times might be eleven o'clock. But he was the kind of guy you didn't mess around with. But I can remember I actually was old-fashioned; I got on my knees and proposed to my wife. She said, "All right." I did it the old-fashioned way. Not like it is nowadays where they fly planes and _____.

NUTTER: When and where did you get married?

HERMES: I got married in 1971. Got married at St. Patrick's Chapel which is located in New Brunswick on the campus. My wife had gone to Rutgers, Rutgers-Douglass. We got married, for reasons I mentioned earlier, there because we wanted to be married in a neutral church because we didn't want to offend either family. A very large family--I mean a large wedding party. I think we had six in our wedding party. She had six bridesmaids. Probably that wedding then cost maybe \$2500, and we had like 250 people at the _____ in New Brunswick; that's where the reception was. _____ because my wife was _____. A very inexpensive wedding, but a great wedding. We had a good time. It would cost \$50,000 probably that wedding today for the amount of people we had. _____.

NUTTER: Who was your best man?

HERMES: My best man was my cousin, that I mentioned earlier in the conversation, one of my cousins, my older cousin, who was like a brother to me, it was he.

NUTTER: Did you have a honeymoon?

HERMES: Yes, we went to the Bahamas. It was great. We had a good time. First time my wife and I were on motorcycles, we got into an accident. We were there for a week. Our second day there we unfortunately got off the beaten track. We rented bikes, and

there's a like a prescribed area they tell you to stay in. Unfortunately somehow we got lost, and we wound up out of the tourist area. You ride on the left-hand side of the road; you don't ride on the right down there. And a garbage truck, I think to this day purposely, cut us off. And he kept getting closer and closer, and he cut us off, and we had to go off the road, and we wound up in a ditch. We wound up with scrapes and scratches and _____, and the bikes were all bent up. The _____ pulling it out. They have nationalized medicine there, and it cost us more to take--we didn't have an ambulance, but we took a taxi from the site to the hospital. And it cost more to take the taxi than it did to have our wounds administered to. It was really unique. Between the taxicab fare, and they gave us tetanus shots and dressed the wounds up, bandaged them up, I think it was \$350, \$400. _____.

NUTTER: You have two children?

HERMES: Yes, two sons.

NUTTER: Do you remember anything about your children that they did when they were small that you were intrigued by?

HERMES: Yes. They both played sports, and they were good. Many awards, both of them. They had a chance to do something that I didn't. They played intramural sports. They played for the high

school. They wrestled, they both wrestled, and they played baseball. _____ played football, _____ football. _____ watching them play.

NUTTER: How old are they now?

HERMES: Rob's 28, and Darren's 25.

NUTTER: What did you find most difficult about raising your kids?

HERMES: Well, you can only do so much as a parent, and then you have to assume that all the upbringing and the teaching will pay off. I'm concerned that, you know, I mean there were drugs back then. I guess there were drugs, and there was alcohol. But I think we did a good job. I can honestly say that they never got in trouble for any of that. We're concerned as parents, you know, just like I'm sure your parents are _____. You hope that nothing happens.

NUTTER: _____?

HERMES: I probably down deep-- And I always said to my kids, my sons, _____, "I yell at you because I care about you. If I didn't yell, if you didn't see me _____ face, then _____ care about you. I say what I say for a reason, like my parents did to me, and

you're going to do to your children." My upbringing-- My father was a gentle guy. He never actually laid a hand on me. My mother did all the slapping. I want to say that, though, I've never laid a hand on my kids or my wife. I certainly-- Verbal abuse, punishing, yes. It comes with the territory. But you teach the best you can, and you hope ____.

NUTTER: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

HERMES: Rich. I don't know. I think everybody _____. But back then I wanted to be a police officer, I wanted to be a fireman. I honestly didn't know what I wanted to do. I started off--I went through high school taking college prep, went through the general course, and said, this is enough for me. College was the thing to do. _____ as far as-- You don't have to know exactly what you're going to do. There's a world of different opportunities out there. College can broaden your mind. Obviously _____. I enjoy working with people, I enjoy helping people, and that's what I've been doing here, working for the Department of Recreation, working at helping people.

NUTTER: How did you decide on your career?

HERMES: I went through college and still was not sure what I was going to do. I actually worked in a dealership while I was going to college, and I didn't really enjoy what I was doing. I mean it

was an income. My wife and I had just gotten married. We didn't have any children at that time. Back in the seventies we had a recession. And, unfortunately, I would have probably lost my job in sales and maybe had to come back to being demoted to another job in the same company. There was a councilman, Mr. Pelle[sp?], who owned the drugstore on Route 27, close to the dealership. I remember one day I walked over there and I asked him, "Are there any jobs in North Brunswick?" This was back in the early seventies. He said, "Yes, as a matter of fact we have some openings under the SETA program." Well, back then, too, because there was a recession, the government was pumping out jobs under the SETA program; it was a funded program from the government. I could have been a teacher, or I could have been a park patrolman. Well, being that I liked the outdoors and hunting, park patrolman's great. I said, "Let me give it a shot."

I started working for the township back in '74. I'm getting my marriage date and my working date-- I started working for the town in '74 as a park patrolman. But I didn't last too long because I was to patrol the parks, but I had no authority, I had no uniform. I didn't have a gun to carry, I didn't have the training. And going around to the parks at night, we didn't have the problems we have today, but we did have problems back then. We had just acquired 110 acres of property for North Brunswick up by the lake. I can remember going there one night, and there was a bunch of kids having a good time, swimming, drinking. And there I was with my little badge that said I'm a park patrolman trying

to clear out these guys. I figured my life was more important, and I almost got my head handed to me.

To make a long story short, I left the park patrolman scene. Went through the rec department, programming. Doing the programming, working with the _____ through that. Got involved with the seniors approximately ten years ago through transportation. We started off very small working with the seniors. Services weren't that great many years ago. But then we started a transportation program for the seniors. We've built on that since, and I've become a part of that _____ for our preschool, for our summer camps.

NUTTER: I have to change this tape around. [Change to Side B of Tape] Were you in any branch of the military?

HERMES: No, I was not. I was the only child of an only child working for my dad. I was able to get a hardship deferment. It was at the height of the Vietnam War. We had a lottery system then, and I was No. 88. That was another one of the scariest-- I should have mentioned that, too. Watching the TV that night when they had a lottery on television, picking the balls out as far as what number you were possibly going into the service. I was 88. I probably would have went. I guess if I'd had to, I would have. But fortunately I didn't have to go, and that was it. No, I was not in any branch of the military.

NUTTER: Who was the person who had the most positive influence on your life?

HERMES: Kim Mangino. _____. I guess a number of people: my pastor when I was young, my parents. I guess in order my parents, my pastor. _____. He was my boss for 20-some years, so he was a big part of my life. He was a great guy, and he _____, so I guess he was also one. And my wife. Because she's not only my wife, but a good partner, a good friend.

NUTTER: Politics.

HERMES: Please don't do politics.

NUTTER: Right. What U.S. president have you admired most and why?

HERMES: Well, I guess if I had to choose one--and I guess it's on hearsay, because actually I wasn't even old enough to remember--but I'd probably have to say Kennedy, John Kennedy. I guess he was a really good president. I guess our president now, Mr. Bush. He's made a commitment, and he's followed through, taking the reins and _____.

NUTTER: Were you alive during the Korean War and the Vietnam War?

HERMES: Yes.

NUTTER: What do you remember about them?

HERMES: I can remember the Vietnam War. There were a lot of demonstrations. There were a lot of people against the war. It was a time of--very troubled times. I had mixed feelings on the issue. A lot of my friends, unfortunately, went to Vietnam. A number of them didn't come back. A number of them tried to avoid the draft by going to Canada. And then there were ones who came back who, unfortunately, weren't the same as when they went. I guess I have bitterness toward that war. It was not the best of times, unfortunately, back in the late sixties when I was growing up.

NUTTER: Where were you when you first heard about the assassination of President Kennedy?

HERMES: I was in Linwood School. I was in Linwood School, and I think they came across with an announcement on the P.A. system. That's where I was.

NUTTER: Where were you when you heard about the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.?

HERMES: Hmmm, where was I? I was in the car. I can't remember. I was in the car, and we were driving. I can't remember the specifics, but I can remember generally. Oh, my God! What's going to happen? I can remember saying that. What's going to happen to this country?

NUTTER: How were you and your community affected by these events? Do you remember how you reacted after these events?

HERMES: Well, initial shock. I guess worry as to what was going to happen. Hoping that the healing process would take place as quickly as possible.

NUTTER: How did these events influence your view on current the current war with Iraq and the war on terrorism _____?

HERMES: Initially, I had mixed feelings on the war, whether or not we knew enough about it to get involved in it. I associate it kind of with Vietnam. But then after seeing what happened on 9/11 and what happened to those innocent people, you know, those 3,000 people that unfortunately were killed, _____, I felt that we should be there to protect our children's children and children's children....

NUTTER: _____. How have the roles of men and women changed both in the community and in the home?

HERMES: Well, the days of chivalry are gone. You know what chivalry is?

NUTTER: Yes.

HERMES: Being _____, opening doors. Those days, they don't seem to be around anymore. I think there was more respect years ago. I don't see that nowadays. In dating and courtship, for example, I think that's changed.

NUTTER: Why did you stay here in North Brunswick? Like what keeps you around here _____?

HERMES: Well, unfortunately--or fortunately, I guess it depends on your point of view--you get into a mold, you fall into a mold very easily. And the older you get, you don't want to do too much changing. You want to make life simple. I guess the reason I've live here--and again, based on the taped interview, North Brunswick was a good thing for me, they've been good to me. There are problems, but there are problems all over. Every community has its problems. I guess convenience, the fact that I live only a few minutes from here, which has its advantages and disadvantages. When there's a problem, I'm always the first one to get called to come here and work on the problem.

NUTTER: ____.

HERMES: Yes. Again, as I mentioned earlier, the rapport with the people. I actually have rapport with the seniors. We're like a big family. An ever-changing family. Unfortunately, the clientele that we deal with ____, people are dying, ____ younger seniors are getting up. It's an important portion of our population; it's a growing portion. And anything I can do to help them, that's what I enjoy doing. Hopefully, ____ maybe somebody will do that for me when I get old.

NUTTER: When you were younger, did you feel a sense of community among the residents?

HERMES: Yes. More so years ago. You had the old ____ neighborhood where-- You see them now, people are moving in, moving out, moving out, moving in. The neighborhood's forever changing. And I don't know the families around the area as much as years ago. I had the same neighbor for years and years. There was a sense where you didn't have to lock your doors at night and could actually go to bed and leave your front door open. I can remember backing out of my driveway without even looking. Nowadays sometimes I have to wait a minute or two before traffic clears. It was more, I guess, a community then. You knew your neighbor, your neighbor knew you. Nowadays it seems like people don't live long enough in the area to become close.

NUTTER: _____. How did the national and international events that have occurred over the last _____ affect your community? You can give an example.

HERMES: How did--? You're talking--?

NUTTER: National events _____ like a war. How was the community affected? Patriotic?

HERMES: I think it brings people _____. I don't think it separates people; it brings people together. The tragedy of 9/11 brought a lot of people together. It should be that way all the time, not because, God forbid, something happened. Initially everybody was flying flags, and then that seemed to wear off. Unfortunately, tragedy, I guess, does bring people together, whether it's on the national or international scene even. People _____. _____. We should always be _____ closer to one another. Unfortunately, sometimes it takes tragedy to bring people together.

NUTTER: How is the township now different from when you first moved here or from your childhood?

HERMES: Well, it's changed politically. Years ago, like I said, we had a township council, and we had many more departments in

the government. That's changed. We streamlined the departments. We went to a Department of Human Services, which now encompasses many old departments. We have senior citizens under the umbrella of the Department of Human Services. We have child care, we have parks and recreation all under the umbrella of the Department of Human Services. That's changed over the years. Our neighbors have changed. Obviously, you know, routes of travel have changed. You can see now with the overpasses and the other things we have in North Brunswick. It's made North Brunswick--again, with the TV programming now, where you can actually sit and watch the township on television for meetings. I think that's also helped make people aware of what's going on in North Brunswick. There are just lots of changes, not necessarily all for the good, _____.

NUTTER: Thank you.

[End of Interview]